

REMARKS

Two (2) sets of three (3) sheets of formal drawings are submitted herewith. The SEM photomicrographs in Figs. 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B which were originally submitted with the application have been replaced with drawings based on the respective photomicrographs. The portions of applicants' specification which pertain to the figures have been amended, as set forth above, to reflect the fact that the figures are drawings based on photomicrographs, and are not the photomicrographs themselves.

If the enclosed formal drawings are acceptable to the Examiner, the Examiner is respectfully requested to replace the originally submitted informal drawings with the new formal drawings submitted herewith. If the enclosed drawings are not acceptable to the Examiner, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact applicants' attorney at the telephone number provided below at the Examiner's earliest possible convenience, so that applicants' attorney can make any requested changes.

In view of the unintended delay in responding to a final rejection of Claims 1 - 5, and in order to expedite patenting of allowed Claims 13 - 18, Claims 1 - 5 have been cancelled without prejudice, as set forth above. Applicants have not reviewed the cited references and argued the distinctions with respect to Claims 1 - 5 due to the time bars which are involved with respect to such a response.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 1 - 3 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0003271, to Otsuki, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,170,429, to Schoepp et al., and U.S. Patent No. 5,488,925, to Kumuda.

Claims 1 - 3 have been cancelled without prejudice, as set forth above. In light of the cancellation of Claims 1 - 3, rejection of Claims 1 - 3 under 35 USC § 103(a), over Otsuki, in view of Schoepp et al. and Kumuda is no longer an issue, and a withdrawal of this grounds for rejection is requested..

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Otsuki, Schoepp et al., and Kumuda, as applied to Claims 1 - 3, and further in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 2001023908, to Okada et al.

Claim 4 has been cancelled without prejudice, as set forth above. In light of the cancellation of Claim 4, rejection of Claim 4 under 35 USC § 103(a), over Otsuki, Schoepp et al., and Kumuda, and further in view of Okada et al. is no longer an issue, and a withdrawal of this grounds for rejection is requested.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Otsuki, Schoepp et al., and Kumuda, as applied to Claims 1 - 3, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,521,046, to Tanaka et al.

Claim 5 has been cancelled without prejudice, as set forth above. In light of the cancellation of Claim 5, rejection of Claim 5 under 35 USC § 103(a), over Otsuki, Schoepp et al., and Kumuda, and further in view of Tanaka et al. is no longer an issue, and a withdrawal of this grounds for the rejection is requested.

Claims 13 - 18 are allowed.

Applicants contend that all presently pending claims in the application are in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the present amendment and to pass the application to allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact applicants' attorney with any questions or suggestions,
at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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